POLLUTION CONTROL HEARINGS BOARD STATE OF WASHINGTON

MARIANNE RASMUSSEN,

Appellant,

PCHB No. 12-091

v.

ORDER ON MOTIONS

PUGET SOUND CLEAN AIR AGENCY,

Respondents.

Appellant Marianne Rasmussen (Appellant) filed an appeal with the Pollution Control Hearings Board (Board) challenging the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency's (PSCAA) issuance of a \$4,425.00 penalty for alleged violations of outdoor burning regulations. PSCAA moved to dismiss Issues 3, 4, and 7 from the October 1, 2012 Pre-Hearing Order. The Appellant opposes PSCAA's motion, and filed three separate motions of her own: a motion to dismiss, a motion to suppress and for summary judgment regarding an unconstitutional search, and a motion for summary judgment regarding defective due process. PSCAA opposes the Appellant's motions, cross-moves for summary judgment on Appellant's motion for summary judgment, and also asks the Board to grant summary judgment in favor of PSCAA on Issue 1.

Attorneys Carolyn A. Lake and Seth Goodstein represented the Appellant. Attorney Jennifer A. Dold represented PSCAA. Board member William H. Lynch presided for the Board under the authority of RCW 43.21B.305, which allows one member of the Board to hear appeals that involve penalties of \$15,000 or less.

The Board reviewed the following pleadings submitted by the parties:

1	1. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency's Motion to Dismiss Pre-Hearing Order Issues 3, 4, and 7;
2	2. Declaration of Max Scarberry, with attached Exhibits 1 - 3;
	3. Declaration of Jennifer A. Dold, with attached Exhibits A and B;
3	4. Appellant Marianne Rasmussen's Response in Opposition to PSCAA Motion for Summary Judgment;
4	5. Reply in Support of Puget Sound Clean Air Agency's Motion Regarding Issues 3, 4, and 7;
5	6. Appellant Marianne Rasmussen's Motion for Summary Judgment Re Undisputed Facts Applied to Applicable Law Requires Dismissal, with attached Exhibits 1 – 5;
6	7. Appellant Marianne Rasmussen's Motion to Suppress and for Summary Judgment Re – Unconstitutional Search;
7	8. Appellant Marianne Rasmussen's Motion to Suppress and for Summary Judgment Re - Defective Due Process;
8	9. Declaration of Marianne Rasmussen; 10. Declaration of Paul Rasmussen;
9	11. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency's Response to Appellant's Three Motions Filed on December 5, 2012 and Cross-Motion for Summary Judgment on Factual S. J. Motion;
10	12. Declaration of Oscar (Jay) Espinosa, with attached Exhibits 1 – 6; 13. Declaration of Rick Hess, with attached Exhibit A;
11	14. Second Declaration of Max Scarberry, with attached Exhibit 1;
12	15. Second Declaration of Jennifer A. Dold, with attached Exhibits A and B; 16. Appellant Marianne Rasmussen's Reply in Support of Summary Judgment; and 17. Second Declaration of Marianne Rasmussen, with attached Exhibit 1.
13	
14	BACKGROUND
15	[1]
16	On October 3, 2011, at approximately 7:24 p.m., Graham Fire & Rescue received two
17	complaints through 911 of a large fire in the vicinity of 4926 268 th Street East in Graham, ¹
18	Washington. Battalion Chief Oscar Espinosa approached the site from State Route 7 and could
19	see a large fire on a parcel to the east on 268 th Street East. Chief Espinosa began traveling on
20	268 th Street East and saw two large individual fires burning in an open field behind some homes
21	¹ Addresses in this geographic area are sometimes also referred to as Spanaway, including on the Pierce County Assessor-Treasurer's web site. <i>Espinosa Decl.</i> at 4.
	ORDER ON MOTIONS

on 4926 268th Street East. One fire was approximately 15 by 15 feet and the other fire was approximately 20 feet by 20 feet in size. The flames from both fires were approximately 25 feet in the air and were clearly visible from the street. The fires were in violation of residential burning requirements because only one residential fire is authorized at a time, residential fires are limited in size and may be no larger than four feet in diameter and three feet in height, and residential outdoor burning in this area requires a permit. *Espinosa Decl*.

[2]

Chief Espinosa exited his vehicle and met Paul Rasmussen in the vicinity of the homes located on 268th Street East. Chief Espinosa explained to him that the fires were illegal and stated that he needed to see the fires to assess what steps needed to be taken to assess public safety and to extinguish the fires. Mr. Rasmussen explained that there were potholes and cattle, including bulls, in the field where the fires were burning. Mr. Rasmussen opened the gate and accompanied Chief Espinosa and other members of Graham Fire & Rescue to where the fires were burning. It took three to five minutes to reach the location of the fires. It is possible that the fires were burning on one or both of two adjacent parcels. *Espinosa Decl.*

[3]

Chief Espinosa confirmed that the fires were composed of natural vegetation. He also determined that the fires presented no fire safety hazard and had appropriate clearances. Because of the safety hazards presented by poor lighting, the potential for tripping, and uncontrollable cows and bulls, Chief Espinosa determined it was safer to have the fires burn themselves out rather than extinguish them by the fire department. Chief Espinosa explained to Mr. Rasmussen

that he could help extinguish the fires by breaking them into smaller piles as the fires burned out. Espinosa Decl.

[4]

After returning to 268th Street East, Chief Espinosa and Paul Rasmussen met with Marianne Rasmussen outside one of the residences. Chief Espinosa explained to both of them why the fires were illegal, why the department had responded, and the department's plan to let the fires burn themselves out. Chief Espinosa asked Mr. Rasmussen for his address, and he provided the 4926 268th Street East address. Chief Espinosa took photographs of the illegal fires and prepared an incident report, which used the address provided by Mr. Rasmussen as the location of the burning. *Espinosa Decl*.

Graham Fire & Rescue is the permitting agency for residential outdoor burn permits in this area. Neither Paul nor Marianne Rasmussen had a permit from the department for the fires that burned on October 3, 2011. On October 5, 2011, Ms. Rasmussen obtained two burn permits for residential outdoor burning from the department. One permit was for 4919 268th Street East, and the other permit was for 4926 268th Street East. *Espinosa Decl*.

[5]

[6]

After receiving the incident report from Graham Fire & Rescue, PSCAA Inspector Max Scarberry searched the property records on the Pierce County Assessor's web site for the property address listed in the incident report. The web site showed Marianne Rasmussen as the taxpayer and owner of 4926 268th Street East in Graham. *Second Scarberry Decl.*

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PSCAA is the agency responsible for issuing permits for agricultural burning in this area.
Applicants for these permits must meet certain criteria, and agricultural burning may only
lawfully occur after a permit is received. Rick Hess, a Supervising Inspector at PSCAA,
checked PSCAA's records and saw that no agricultural burn permits were issued to Marianne
Rasmussen or Paul Rasmussen, or to the 4919 or 4926 268 th Street East, Spanaway addresses.
Hess Decl.

[8]

On October 26, 2011, PSCAA issued Notice of Violation No. 3-006154 (NOV) to the Appellant. The facts alleged in the NOV are that on October 3, 2011, at approximately 7:38 p.m., the Appellant caused or allowed two unlawful land clearing fires at 4926 268th St. E, Parcel #0318254702 in the Spanaway area of unincorporated Pierce County. The NOV further states that land clearing burning is prohibited in Pierce County, and that the fires were conducted without a valid permit from Graham Fire & Rescue. *Scarberry Decl., Ex. 1*.

[9]

The NOV contains boxes, which when checked by the PSCAA Inspector, indicate violations of particular provisions of PSCAA or State regulation. The boxes checked in this NOV issued to the Appellant are, as follows:

Violation of Regulation I, Section(s):

- 8.04(a) Failure to comply with the provisions of Chapter 173-425 WAC.
- 8.13(a) Land Clearing Burning in Pierce County.

Other (Chapter 173-425 WAC, Order of Approval, etc.):

- 173-425-040(5) Outdoor Burning of organic refuse in a designated area with a reasonable alternative to burning.
- 173-425-050 Outdoor Burning without a valid permit.
- 173-425-060(2)(b) Land clearing burning without a valid permit.

Scarberry Decl., Ex. 1.

The NOV contained a Corrective Action Order, which required the Appellant to submit a written report to PSCAA within 10 days of receipt of the NOV. The Corrective Action Order stated the report must describe the action taken to correct the violation and achieve compliance with PSCAA's regulations. The Corrective Action Order also called for the immediate ceasing of all unlawful outdoor burning. *Scarberry Decl.*, *Ex. 1*.

[10]

[11]

On November 1, 2011, the Appellant wrote a letter to Max Scarberry, who is the PSCAA Inspector who issued the NOV. The Appellant acknowledged receipt of the NOV, and stated that she is the owner of two adjacent parcels: Parcel #R0318254701 where the fires were lit, and Parcel #R0318254702. She noted that Paul Rasmussen, who is also named in the NOV, is her son and not the property owner. The Appellant further stated that they were cleaning up branches and downed trees for the safety of the cattle that graze on her property. She had assured her son that she would stop by the fire station in Graham to obtain the burning permit, but was unable to accomplish it that day. Her son was under the impression that she had obtained the permit. *Scarberry Decl., Ex.* 2.

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On July 25, 2012, PSCAA issued Notice and Order of Civil Penalty No. 12-190CP (penalty) to the Appellant in the amount of \$4,425.00 for the NOV issued on October 26, 2011. *Scarberry Decl., Ex. 3.* PSCAA decided to issue a civil penalty for only one violation cited in the NOV, which was causing or allowing an outdoor fire that burned without a valid permit, in violation of WAC 173-425-050. *Hess Decl.*

[13]

The Appellant argues that the November letter she wrote to PSCAA in response to the NOV should be suppressed because it was illegally obtained self-incriminating evidence. The Appellant asserts that the Board should dismiss the penalty because the NOV and the civil penalty are separate punitive responses by PSCAA and subject the Appellant to double jeopardy. Furthermore, Paul Rasmussen states he would have refused entry to Chief Espinosa if Mr. Rasmussen had been informed that he had the right to refuse Chief Espinosa entry. *Paul Rasmussen Decl*. Appellant contends that dismissal is appropriate because of an unconstitutional search. She also contends that dismissal is appropriate because she did not engage in prescribed burn activity on the cited property, and even if the Board found that she did, the activity was allowed through the exemption for agricultural burning. Finally, the Appellant argues that the notice provided by PSCAA was defective and in violation of due process.

ANALYSIS

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[1]

Summary judgment is a procedure available to avoid unnecessary trials where formal issues cannot be factually supported and cannot lead to, or result in, a favorable outcome to the opposing party. *Jacobsen v. State*, 89 Wn.2d 104, 108, 569 P.2d 1152 (1977). The summary judgment procedure is designed to eliminate trial if only questions of law remain for resolution.

The party moving for summary judgment must show there are no genuine issues of

material fact and the moving party is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. *Magula v. Benton Franklin Title Co., Inc.*, 131 Wn.2d 171, 182, 930 P.2d 307 (1997). A material fact in a summary judgment proceeding is one affecting the outcome under the governing law. *Eriks v. Denver*, 118 Wn.2d 451, 456, 824 P.2d 1207 (1992). If the moving party satisfies its burden, then the non-moving party must present evidence demonstrating that material facts are in dispute. *Atherton Condo Ass'n v. Blume Dev. Co.*, 115 Wn.2d 506, 516, 799 P.2d 250 (1990), *reconsideration denied* (1991). A non-moving party may not oppose summary judgment by nakedly asserting that there are unresolved factual questions. *Bates v. Grace United Methodist Church*, 12 Wn. App. 111, 115, 529 P.2d 466 (1974). In a summary judgment proceeding, all facts and reasonable inferences must be construed in favor of the non-moving party. *Jones v. Allstate Ins. Co.*, 146 Wn.2d 291, 300, 45 P.3d 1068 (2002). Summary judgment may also be granted to the non-moving party when the facts are not in dispute. *Impecoven v. Department of Revenue*, 120 Wn.2d 357, 365, 842 P.2d 470 (1992). There are no material facts in dispute, which are necessary to resolve this matter, so summary judgment is appropriate.

1	[2]
2	The Board has jurisdiction over the subject matter and the parties pursuant to RCW

43.21B.110. The Board reviews the issues raised de novo. WAC 371-08-485.

[3]

PSCAA requests the Board to dismiss Issues 3 and 7, and for summary judgment in its favor on Issues 1 and 4:

- 1. Did Marianne Rasmussen violate Agency Regulation I, Section 8.04(a) and WAC 173-425-050 by causing or allowing an outdoor fire that burned without a valid permit, on or about October 3, 2011, at 4926 268th Street East, Spanaway, WA, as alleged in Civil Penalty No. 12-190CP?
- 3. Whether PSCAA lacks jurisdiction over the type of activity alleged in this action?
- 4. Whether the Notice of Violation is unconstitutionally vague in that it does not provide notice of the particular WAC 173-425-050 section or any section incorporated therein with sufficient specificity for Appellant to prepare an adequate defense?
- 7. Is this action barred by double jeopardy?

Appellant raises numerous constitutional issues. The Board has previously stated, and the parties acknowledge, that the Board does not have jurisdiction over a facial challenge to the constitutionality of a statute or regulation, but will construe a statute in a manner that presumes it is constitutional. When ruling on an "as applied" challenge, the Board limits its jurisdiction to addressing procedural defects or issues that arise in particular cases. The Board also has jurisdiction over whether a challenged agency action complied with applicable laws. The

[4]

Board's consideration of an agency's compliance with statutes and regulations may, accordingly, also dispose of procedural due process claims which assert noncompliance with those laws.

First Romanian Pentecostal Church of Kenmore v. Ecology, PCHB Nos. 08-098 & 08-099

(Order on Summary Judgment, May 22, 2009) (discussing Cornelius v. Ecology, PCHB No. 06-099, Order on Summary Judgment as Amended on Reconsideration, January 18, 2008).

Because there is some overlap between the issues listed in PSCAA's Motions and the issues listed in the Appellant's Motions, the Board will group similar issues together in its analysis.

[5]

<u>Issue 3 – Whether PSCAA Lacks Jurisdiction Over the Activity</u>

PSCAA initially asked the Board to dismiss Issue 3 on the basis that it was a facial attack on the validity of Regulation I, Sec. 8.04. The Appellant denies it is attacking the validity of the PSCAA regulation, but instead is questioning its application in this case. Appellant questions whether PSCAA may enforce outdoor burning rules against the Appellant through WAC 173-425, when the agricultural burning provisions of WAC 173-430 are applicable to the burning activity in question. Appellant maintains that the agricultural burning provisions apply because the property is zoned agricultural and was being used for agricultural activities. As PSCAA observes in its Reply,² it is the permitting agency for agricultural burning in the region, and certain requirements must be met before a person may conduct agricultural burning. The

² PSCAA Reply at 3, n.1.

Appellant neither received a permit for agricultural burning from PSCAA, nor contacted the fire department before the burning occurred in order to qualify for unpermitted agricultural burning pursuant to WAC 173-430-020(5) and RCW 70.94.6524(7). In fact, the Appellant obtained two burn permits for residential outdoor burning two days after the burning occurred. Because the zoning and use of the property for agricultural purposes do not by themselves trigger the applicability of the agricultural burning provisions, and other issues in the case duplicate the arguments raised by the Appellant, the Board dismisses Issue 3 from the case.

[6]

In ruling on Issue 3, the Board did not consider Appellant's argument that WAC 173-425-050 is not enforceable because it references repealed state statutes. This constitutes a facial challenge on the validity of this regulation and is not properly within the jurisdiction of the Board. The Board also did not consider the Appellant's reference to an unproven prior violation having been used by PSCAA in determining the penalty. The record does not reflect that a prior violation was considered in establishing the amount of the penalty, and in any event, the absence or existence of a prior violation is more appropriately discussed under the reasonableness of the penalty.

Appellant's Motion for Summary Judgment Re - Undisputed Facts

19 [7]

The Appellant argues that summary judgment in her favor is appropriate because PSCAA cited the wrong parcel and the wrong person, and any burning that occurred was exempt

agricultural burning. PSCAA responds by stating that: the Appellant Marianne Rasmussen owns the properties on 4919 and 4926 268th Street East in Spanaway; her son Paul Rasmussen lit the unpermitted fires on property owned by her; the Appellant was present when the burning occurred; the Appellant was aware of the need for a permit; and that she obtained the burning permits two days later.

[8]

As PSCAA correctly states, the Board has repeatedly held property owners liable for burning violations on their property even when the owners were not the actual burners or even present at the time. The Board has observed that the Washington Court of Appeals has applied strict liability regarding violations of the Washington Clean Air Act. *Scheppe v. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency*, PCHB No. 07-004 (2007) (citing *Wm. Dickson Co. v. PSAPCA*, 81 Wn. App. 403, 409-10 (1996)); *Opdahl v. Olympic Region Clean Air Agency*, PCHB No. 09-142 (2010); *Leppell v. Olympic Region Clean Air Agency*, PCHB No. 08-102 (2009). Despite Chief Espinosa identifying Paul Rasmussen as the homeowner and using the address that Paul Rasmussen provided him in his incident report, which was later used by PSCAA in the NOV, it is still clear under the facts of this case that Ms. Rasmussen was aware of the burning activity and "caused or allowed" the burning to take place on her property without a permit. Appellant's motion for summary judgment regarding undisputed facts is denied.

<u>Issue 1 - Whether the Appellant Committed the Alleged Violation</u>

PSCAA's response to Appellant's motions includes a cross-motion for summary

judgment on Issue 1. PSCAA argues that the undisputed facts show that the Appellant caused or allowed outdoor burning without a permit on property she owns. Because the Board believes some more information is needed regarding the agricultural burning regulations in order to have a complete record to rule upon, the Board denies summary judgment to PSCAA on Issue 1.

[9]

<u>Issue 4 – Adequacy of Notice/Appellant's Motion Re- Defective Due Process</u>

Appellant declares that the NOV does not offer a procedure for citizens to bring errors to the attention of PSCAA. The Appellant also contends that the NOV contains blanket references to various administrative rules, and that PSCAA should not be able to make such sweeping references and then pick and choose which subsections to enforce. Appellant further argues that due process requires notice reasonably calculated to apprise the parties of the nature and character of the proceedings which will affect them so they may adequately prepare for hearing.

[10]

As PSCAA observes, the Appellant's arguments are misplaced. The Appellant had numerous options once the NOV was issued, including appealing the Corrective Action to the Board. PSCAA cited one violation in the penalty, which was burning without a permit. The NOV states that fires were conducted without a valid permit from the fire department. The

[11]

NOV cites to PSCAA and state regulations which describe outdoor burning without a permit as unlawful. Chief Espinosa spoke to the Appellant and her son the night of the fires and expressly told her why the fires were illegal, and the need to obtain burn permits. Ms. Rasmussen obtained two residential burn permits two days after the incident. Ms. Rasmussen sent a follow-up letter to PSCAA following the issuance of the NOV in which she indicated that she had meant to get the burn permits but was not able to accomplish it before the burning began. There is no indication that the Appellant did not understand the alleged violation. She had every opportunity to appeal both the Corrective Action Order and the penalty. The Board concludes she was provided constitutionally adequate notice. *Walker Specialty Construction, Inc. v. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency*, PCHB No. 02-126 (2003). The Board grants summary judgment to PSCAA on Issue 4, and denies Appellant's Motion to Dismiss Re: Defective Due Process.

Issue 7 – Double Jeopardy

Appellant maintains that PSCAA's issuance of the NOV and the penalty places the Appellant in double jeopardy in violation of the 5th Amendment of the United States Constitution and Art. I, Sec. 9, of the Washington State Constitution. Article I, Sec. 9 provides: "No person shall . . . be twice put in jeopardy for the same offense." The Washington Courts have interpreted the words used in Article I, Sec. 9 and the 5th Amendment to the United States Constitution in the same way. The purpose of the doctrine is to protect the accused from being twice put in jeopardy for the same offense. *State v. Ridgely*, 70 Wn.2d 555, 557, 424 P.2d 632

[12]

(1967). Appellant argues that double jeopardy applies to civil matters when two government enforcement actions cover the same transaction and are punitive in nature. PSCAA responds that the NOV is not a separate enforcement action, but instead, the first step in an enforcement action which may lead to the issuance of a penalty. The NOV and civil appeal procedures applicable to the case have been established by the Legislature. See RCW 70.94.211, 70.94.221, and 70.94.431. *PSCAA's Response* at 15-16.

[13]

In support of her double jeopardy claim, Appellant maintains that PSCAA's NOV required her to submit a "confession" in violation of her right against compulsory self-incrimination. Appellant asks that Ms. Rasmussen's letter, dated November 1, 2011, written in response to the NOV be suppressed. PSCAA observes that a NOV offers numerous options to a potential violator, and that Ms. Rasmussen voluntarily chose to write back to PSCAA. The Board agrees with PSCAA that Ms. Rasmussen voluntarily chose to respond to PSCAA and that suppression of the letter is not justified. The Board will consider this letter as part of the evidence in this case.

[14]

The Board is aware of only one instance when a quasi-judicial board within the Environmental and Land Use Hearings Office addressed a double jeopardy issue raised by the parties. In 2002, the Forest Practices Appeals Board³ reviewed the issue of whether a plaintiff could be subject to a notice to comply issued by the Department of Natural Resources, when the

³ The Forest Practices Appeals Board was abolished and its jurisdiction transferred to the Pollution Control Hearings Board in 2010. See Laws of 2010, chapter 210, section 41.

plaintiff was being criminally prosecuted in district court for the violation. The Board found double jeopardy inapplicable to that situation. *Pallogi v. Department of Natural Resources*, FPAB 02-006 (Order Granting Summary Judgment, 2002). Appellant's contention that the separate NOV and penalty provisions place the Appellant in double jeopardy appears to the Board to be a facial challenge to the statutes establishing this very process. The Board declines to assert jurisdiction over Issue 7 and dismisses it from the case.

Motion Re – Unconstitutional Search

Appellant's motion to suppress evidence.

Appellant argues that because Chief Espinosa failed to inform Paul Rasmussen that he could refuse entry to the fire department to inspect the burn piles, this constitutes an unconstitutional search, and all of PSCAA's gathered evidence should be suppressed. The outdoor burning, however, was clearly observed by Chief Espinosa as he drove down 268th Street East. He was able to see from a public roadway that the fires were illegal in size and in number. Furthermore, Graham Fire & Rescue had no request for burn permits in its data base. Likewise, PSCAA did not have any requests for agricultural burn permits in its data base. There are sufficient facts to establish that burning occurred without a permit, so there is no need to further address the Appellant's claim of an unconstitutional search. The Board denies

[15]

1	Based on the foregoing analysis, the Board enters the following:
2	ORDER
3	The Board GRANTS the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency's Motion to Dismiss
4	Legal Issues 3 and 7.
5	2. The Board GRANTS Summary Judgment to the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency
6	on Issue 4, and DENIES Summary Judgment to the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency on Issue 1.
7	3. The Board denies Appellant's Motions.
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9	SO ORDERED this 14 th day of January, 2013.
10	POLLUTION CONTROL HEARINGS BOARD
11	William H. Lynch, Presiding
12	william II. Lynch, Flesiding
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